

YBarbo Ranch House
Genova, San Augustine County, Texas

HABS NO. Tex-268

~~SAN AUGUSTINE VERNALY~~

Nacogdoches Co.

Nacogdoches & Vic. Tex.

HABS

TEX.

174-NACO.V

2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District # 6 Tex 2

Historic American Buildings Survey
Birdsell P. Briscoe, District Officer
4391 Main Street, Houston, Texas

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Y-BARBO RANCH HOUSE YBARBO (see next page)
 Near Milam, San Augustine County, Texas
 NACOGDOCHES VIC. Nacogdoches Co

Owner Harkley

R-

Date of Erection 1773 - 4

Architect None

Builder Gil Y-Barbo

Present Condition Bad

Number of Stories One

Other Existing Records Crockett's Two Centuries in East Texas.
 Sabine County Court House.

Materials of Construction Logs

Additional Data: This place has two rooms. Occupied by negro tenants. Probably the oldest house in East Texas. YBarbo Ranch was old when Americans first came into this section in 1830. References: San Augustine County Court House.

In Austin I was told that there were the remains of an old Spanish Ranch house in East Texas. The Y-Bar-O Ranch- somewhere around San Augustine. And in San Augustine the rumor became fact. Yes, there was such a place about 15 miles east on Highway 21. Old log house, nothing much left of it now. Funny, lots of queer people had asked about that tumpled down pile of logs. Old, though, maybe that was the reason. Owned by a man named Harkley. Harkley kept a store on the highway about a mile from the ranch.

So, later, with Harkley's young son as guide, I visited the Y-Bar-O. I found a two room log house squat upon an abrupt elevation in an otherwise level valley occupied by a negro tenant. This was the Y-Barbo Ranch house. Except for the roof it was as sound as when the logs were hewn. The split shingle roof had gone the way of all single roofs and corrugated iron sheets had taken up the right a first time and rain and rust, and sun. Its location had been selected for strategic purposes. No marauding Indians could attack it except across an unbroken field. My young guide told me that the ground around the place was full of arrow heads, and that the negro tenant former slave occupied the place always plucking up broken pieces of flint lock guns, cap-and-ball pistols, sabres, and the like. And from Mr. Harkley himself-

"Notice that at what you crossed between here and the ranch house?"
 "Yes".

"Well, the thirty-thous-and-gold, camped there overnight. You've heard of the 'thirty-thous-and-gold'?" he added hopefully. Mr. Harkley saw that I had. He smiles. "Anyway," he added, "Negro girl, daughter of my tenant there at the ranch, found a chunk of silver in the milk pan. Took it to a dentist in town and had her teeth filled".

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Y-BAR-O RANCH HOME
Hico, Texas, San Augustine County, Texas.

Back in San Augustine in Crockett's "Two Centuries in East Texas" and from other sources, verbal and written, I ran to earth the story of the Y-Bar-O ranch. Incidentally, I discovered it was not the "Y-Bar-O" ranch at all but the "Gil Ybarbo or Gil y Barbo Ranch." So much for colloquialisms, or, perhaps for my Texas ears.

Here is the story of the Ybarbo Ranch. It steals a page from Evangeline and adds a few of its own.

In 1773 there was living in Adas, in what is now Louisiana, one Antonio Gil y Barbo. He was 40 years of age. With him lived his mother, sister and sister-in-law. On June 6 of this, to them, eventful year a Spanish Condeader named Ripperdo rode into Adas with the word that all Spanish inhabitants were to abandon their homes and fall back to Bexar and take up land on the San Antochic River. Bexar being something more than 300 miles to the southwest. This meant a difficult journey. Crops were maturing, their year's work would be lost. It also meant the abandonment of all their possessions. Here Ripperdi disappears from the picture and his aged deputy, Teniente Gonzales is left to carry out his orders.

On June 25 the trek begins and the mournful cavalcade set its eyes to the west. At Lobanillo, the crossing of the Sabine, some 24 persons, too ill and worn to continue the journey, were left. Among these twenty-four is the Barbo family. The Ybarbo's did not later join the hegira to San Antonio but settled on the present site of the ranch house not far distant from the crossing at Lobanillo. The Saga of the Ybarbos is necessarily episodic. Antonio apparently built the present ranch house in 1773 or 1774. Nacogdoches was the nearest Spanish settlement about fifty miles to the west.

In 1779 Antonio Gil Y Barbo is recognized as a valuable agent among the Indians and he was awarded the high-sounding title of Lieutenant Governor of Nacogdoches with a salary of 500 pesos a year. He was given exclusive right by the Spanish Government to establish a commissary and trade with the Indians. It is probable that he grew both powerful and rich for in 1796 there is a record that he was dismissed from the Spanish Government Service.

-TW Sept. 15 '36